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PART FOUR OF SIX
VENOM™
LETHAL PROTECTOR
BAGLEY PANOSIAN
INSIDE: YOU--AND VENOM™ & SPIDER-MAN® WILL CONFRONT THE FIRST FEMALE SYMBIOTE!!

A SECRET INSTALLATION DEEP IN THE MOJAVE DESERT.
YOU! CARLTON DRAKE!
COME CLOSER...
...SO WE CAN SUCK YOUR LUNGS OUT THROUGH YOUR NOSE!
VERY COLORFUL, MISTER BROCK-- OR SHOULD I SAY, "VENOM?"
BUT THE LIFE FOUNDATION PREFERS ME INTACT!
OUR CLIENTS PAY HANDSOMELY FOR THE EMERGENCY CONDOS WE PROVIDE IN THE EVENT OF WORLD CHAOS -- SURVIVALISM WITHOUT THE FUSS, SO TO SPEAK.
AND THEY EXPECT TO BE PROTECTED IN THAT SHELTERED ENVIRONMENT --
-- WHICH IS WHERE YOU COME IN!
PROCEED.
TIK
NO! NOT AGAIN! THAT BEAM, PIERCING THE SONIC CAGE!
P-PULLING AT US! IT... I-IT --

Stan Lee Presents: VENOM: LETHAL PROTECTOR

PART 4 DEADLY BIRTH!

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[redacted]

WHEN WE HEARD OF THE INCREDIBLY POWERFUL CREATURE CALLED *CARNAGE*, WE DID SOME *RESEARCH* --
--AND FOUND THAT HE GOT HIS ABILITIES FROM A *SPAWN* OF THE ALIEN SYMBIOTE YOU WEAR AS A COSTUME!
WE THOUGHT THAT IF WE COULD OBTAIN AND CONTROL *OTHER* SPAWN, COMBINE THEM WITH VOLUNTEER SECURITY PERSONNEL --
-- WE'D HAVE THE PERFECT ***GUARDIANS*** FOR OUR PAMPERED, WELL-PAYING CLIENTELE.
AND THIS IS THE FIFTH AND FINAL "*SEED*" OUR SCIENTISTS DETERMINED YOU POSSESS.
IF ONE HAD A TASTE FOR THE MELODRAMATIC, ONE MIGHT CALL IT...
...THE LAST SON OF VENOM!

SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, WHERE AN ALL-HOURS CONVENIENCE STORE HAS JUST BEEN ROBBED.
A FACT THAT HAS NOT ESCAPED THE NOTICE OF A PASSING CHIPS CRUISER.
YA WANT THE SILVER, MAN, YA GOTTA TAKE SOME LEAD WITH IT!
BDAM BDAM BDAM
-- Muh HEART, Muh ♫ ACHY-BREAKY-- Huh ?!
A JOGGER! LOOK OUT--!
SKREEECH
WE OUGHTA GIVE THAT BONEHEAD IN THE SHORTS A CUT O' THE TAKE!
YEAH, WE'RE HOME FREE!
THOMP!
WHU--?
HIM?
I-IT CAN'T BE--!

BOO!
OKAY, SO MAYBE I SHOULD LEAVE THE SPOOKY STUFF TO GHOST RIDER!
THWAP
BUT WEBBING UP THIS WINDSHIELD IS PURE SPIDEY!
AND IT SLOWED 'EM DOWN ENOUGH--

--SO THEY WON'T HIT THAT TREE *TOO* HARD!
WUNCH
WEEOOO WEEOOO WEE OOO
THIS MAY BE A SILLY QUESTION, AFTER WHAT YOU JUST DID, BUT ARE YOU THE *REAL* SPIDER-MAN?
I DON'T HAVE A ***DRIVER'S LICENSE*** TO SHOW YOU BUT, YEP-- I'M ME!
WOW. WE SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR *HELP*, ***SIR***...
...IF THERE'S *ANYTHING* WE CAN DO IN ***RETURN***--
UH, WELL, NOW THAT YOU *MENTION* IT...
...COULD YOU LOAN ME A ***QUARTER***?

SOON...
SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR AEROBICS, MARY JANE --
-- BUT I JUST WANTED TO TOUCH BASE... AND SAY I MISS YOU.
I MISS YOU, TOO, HON. WHEN ARE YOU COMING BACK TO NEW YORK?
SOON, I HOPE. I HAVEN'T TRACKED VENOM DOWN YET, BUT I HAVE A NEW LEAD -- WEIRD CREATURES HAVE BEEN SEEN AROUND HERE LATELY!
FROM DESCRIPTIONS, THEY COULD BE SYMBIOTES, LIKE VENOM'S "OTHER"!
ONE'S BEEN ATTACKING PUBLIC PLACES, CONFRONTING POLICE -- ALMOST LIKE IT WAS TESTING ITSELF!
THERE'S ONLY ONE GATHERING PLACE IT HASN'T HIT -- A NEW MALL NEAR SALINAS!
I'M HEADED THERE NOW, BUT DON'T WORRY -- I'LL BE HOME SAFE AND SOUND IN NO TIME!
SURE, PETER.
'BYE.

THE DESERT...
I KNOW. THIS IS FRUSTRATING, HUMILIATING--
--FOR US BOTH!
THE SOUND WALL IS SOLID, STRONG. BUT IT'S EVEN WORSE FOR YOU, MY "OTHER."
TRYING TO FORCE OUR WAY THROUGH CAUSES YOU AGONY, PAIN SO INTENSE THAT I FEEL IT AS WELL!
I'M ALMOST GLAD MY FATHER AND I ARE ESTRANGED.
I DEVELOPED MY MUSCLES TO IMPRESS HIM! BUT EVEN WITH YOUR ALIEN POWER, WE'RE HELPLESS. FATHER WOULD BE ASHAMED OF ME...
...AGAIN.
Hnh? WHAT'S THAT? YOU SAY I SHOULD TRY MY OWN STRENGTH --
-- ALONE? OF COURSE! SONICS DON'T HURT OUR HUMAN HALF! AND THAT COULD MEAN...
YESSSSSS!

NEAR SALINAS...
THERE'S THE MALL! BUT IS IT THE NEXT TARGET?
Ah!
A CLUE!
KREESH
Oh MAN! THIS PLACE IS IN PIECES!
I SHOULD'VE GOTTEN HERE SOONER!
HEELLLLP!!
THEN AGAIN, MAYBE I'M HERE JUST IN TIME!
BE COOL, LADY! EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE FINE!
WHO'RE YOU KIDDIN', PAL? EVEN IF YOU REALLY WERE SPIDER-MAN, YOU WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST--
--THAT!

WELL, WELL! AN HONEST-TO-GOODNESS **SUPER-HERO?** PERFECT!
BREAKING YOU IN HALF WILL MAKE OUR LITTLE EXERCISE A **COMPLETE** SUCCESS!
AW, NO! SOMEONE WITH A LIVING COSTUME... WHO WANTS TO **KILL** ME?!
IT'S DÉJÀ VU ALL OVER **AGAIN!**

WHILE BENEATH THE MOJAVE...
I KNOW YOU'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE, MISTER BROCK, BUT I STILL FIND IT FASCINATING!
IT WASN'T EASY DEVISING A WAY TO ACCELERATE THE MATURATION OF YOUR SYMBIOTE SEED, BUT WE PREVAILED!
AND THE OTHER SPAWN HAVE ALREADY BEEN MATCHED WITH TOP SECURITY PERSONNEL --
-- SENT OUT TO CONFRONT THE POLICE, TO TEST THEIR POWERS AND DETERMINE IF THEY WILL TRULY MAKE CAPABLE PROTECTORS.
AND, IF THEIR SUCCESS TO DATE IS ANY INDICATION, THIS ONE SHOULD BE JUST AS--
EYOWK!
--Eh?!
I-- I DON'T GET IT! THAT CAGE SHOULD HOLD A NORMAL HUMAN!
YOU IDIOT! BROCK HAS OLYMPIC-LEVEL STRENGTH! YOU SET THE DECIBELS TOO LOW!

H-HE SLAMMED RICARDO INTO THE CONTROLS!
THEY'RE *SHORTIN' OUT!* THE *MONSTER'S*--
FREE!
INDEED! FREE--
--FURIOUS--
--AND VERY, *VERY HUNGRY!*

PERHAPS WE'LL SMASH ALL OF YOUR MASKS FIRST! YES!
THAT SHOULD MAKE IT MUCH EASIER TO DECIDE --
--WHOSE FACE WE WANT TO EAT FIRST!
WHHAGHH!
HAVING PORTABLE SONIC WEAPONS AVAILABLE WAS A WISE PRECAUTION! ACTIVATE THE AUXILIARY SOUND CAGE!
AND SEE THAT THE DECIBEL DENSITY IS AT A SAFE LEVEL THIS TIME!
THOUGH I BEGIN TO WONDER, NOW THAT WE HAVE THE LAST SPAWN --
--IF WE REALLY NEED MISTER BROCK ALIVE AT ALL!

INTERLUDE: A HIDDEN CITY BENEATH SAN FRANCISCO, LOST SINCE THE EARTHQUAKE OF 1906...
...AND NOW HOME TO A SOCIETY OF OUTCASTS.
I WAS HOPING WE'D SEE MISTER BROCK UP ABOVE, MOM.
I KNOW, TIMOTHY. IT'S A SHAME THE COUNCIL REFUSED HIM SANCTUARY.
HE WAS A FRIEND.
C'MON, ELIZABETH, YOU SHOULD BE USING VENOM STORIES TO SCARE YOUR BOY INTO DOING HIS CHORES.
THAT PSYCHO'S A MONSTER, NOT SOME "FRIENDLY GHOST!"
AND YOU'RE A FOOL, NATHANIEL! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN HOW VENOM PROTECTED US ALL FROM ROLAND TREECE'S DIGGERS?!
WHAT IF THEY COME BACK?
IF THEY DO, MY CHILD, GOD WILL PROVIDE.
I PRAY THAT HE DOES, REVEREND RAKESTRAW. BECAUSE IF THOSE MECHANICAL DEMONS DO RETURN --
--PRAYER WILL BE ALL WE HAVE!

THAT CLINCHES IT! THIS **HAS** TO BE *ANOTHER* SYMBIOTE!
IT DOESN'T TRIGGER MY **SPIDER-SENSE** ANY MORE THAN VENOM OR CARNAGE DO!
BUT THE WOMAN **INSIDE** IS NEW AT THIS --
--AND THAT GIVES **ME** AN EDGE!
NORMALLY, I WOULDN'T HIT A *"LADY"* IN THE BACK!
BUT WHEN SHE'S TRYING TO **KILL** ME, I MAKE AN **EXCEPTION!**
NUTS! ALIEN COSTUME HELPED HER TAKE THE PUNCH!
SHE'S RECOVERING ALREADY! MAYBE SOME **WEBBING**...!

THWIP
Whoop! SHE'S FAST!
REAL FAST!
SPESH
TURNING TAIL ALREADY?! THIS IS GOING TO BE EASIER THAN I THOUGHT!
UH-HUH. JUST KEEP THINKING THAT..!

AN EXPERIENCED FIGHTER WOULDN'T UNDERESTIMATE HER OPPONENT!
"WOULDN'T RUSH UP AT ME, TAKE WILD CHANCES!"
WOULDN'T FALL INTO A TRAP!
WHOONF!
I'M IN TROUBLE!

STRIKE AGENT FOUR, REQUESTING EMERGENCY EVACUATION!
NOW TO KEEP THAT WEB-SLINGER **OFF MY BACK!**
H-HEY!
NO! I-I'M HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THAT **WINDOW!**
FOR IT, MAYBE--
--BUT NOT **THROUGH** IT!
Whew!
NOW FOR--
Huh?! SHE'S **GONE!**
BUT WHERE--?
I SAW HER ON THE STAIRS, MISTER! SHE'S HEADIN' FOR THE **ROOF!**
THANKS!
SECONDS LATER...
SOME SORT OF **HOVERCRAFT,** JUST TAKING OFF!

GOT IT!
THWIP
OR HAS IT GOT ME?!
SAN FRANCISCO.
HE'S FAINTED AGAIN, MISTER TREECE!
WELL? REVIVE HIM!
YES, SIR. I'LL PREPARE ANOTHER INJECTION.
HE'S THE FIRST LIVE PARK DWELLER WE'VE CAPTURED!
I HAVE TO KNOW WHAT HE KNOWS!
BUT WHAT COULD SOME HOBO KNOW THAT--
JENKINS, DO I PAY YOU TO ASK QUESTIONS?
Uh... NO...
THEN DON'T!
THERE'S A FORTUNE IN GOLD BENEATH THAT PARK! BUT IF THOSE SCAVENGERS FIND IT, MAKE IT PUBLIC, THE CITY COULD CLAIM IT ALL!
I'VE GOT TO LOCATE THEIR UNDERGROUND LAIR AND TAKE THEM OUT OF THE PICTURE, ONE WAY... OR ANOTHER!

WHILE, IN THE DESERT --
--A PNEUMATIC LIFT LOWERS A DISTINCTIVE CRAFT INTO THE LIFE FOUNDATION COMPLEX...
..., CARRYING A RED-AND-BLUE STOWAWAY WITH IT!
WOMAN MUST BE THE ONE I FOUGHT!
SYMBIOTE'S FORMED INTO CIVILIAN CLOTHES!
BUT I CAN DEAL WITH THEM LATER!
RIGHT NOW I HAVE TO GET A LINE ON VENOM! LET'S SEE, WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO --
--SPIDER-SENSE! SOMEONE COMING THIS WAY!
OKAY, THE DIRECT APPROACH IT IS!

EXCUSE ME!
Hnh?
I SEEM TO BE *LOST*--!
--COULD YOU TELL ME WHERE YOUR *LIVING ALIEN COSTUME* DEPARTMENT IS?
WHAT THE--?!
ANOTHER GUARD!
AND *MORE* COMING OUT OF THAT ELEVATOR!
THIS IS *NOT* WHAT I WANTED!
WOULD'VE GOTTEN FARTHER IF I'D KEPT A *LOW* PROFILE!
THWIP
GOTTA *REMOVE* "*DIRECT APPROACH*" FROM MY LIST OF *OPTIONS*! Oh, WELL...

VENOM!
WHERE IS HE ?!
FIRST ONE WHO TALKS GETS TO STAY CONSCIOUS!
HOW ANNOYING.
IT APPEARS, MISTER BROCK, THAT YOU HAVE A CHAMPION...
...AND THAT YOU'VE JUST BECOME MORE TROUBLE THAN YOU'RE WORTH!
DOCTOR EMERSON, INSTIGATE... REMOVAL PROCEDURES.
NO! T-TRYING TO SEPARATE US. TAKE YOU AWAY... B-BREAK OUR BOND!
STOP IT! S-STOOOOO
OOAARG
PLK

ATTENTION, SPIDER-MAN! I HAVE SOME NEWS YOU MAY FIND OF INTEREST.
CARLTON DRAKE?! THEN THE LIFE FOUNDATION IS BEHIND ALL THIS?
YOU SAY YOU'VE COME FOR VENOM, UNDOUBTEDLY TO BRING THAT MISCREANT TO JUSTICE. BUT AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE SCREEN BEHIND ME...
...THAT PARTICULAR NECESSITY NO LONGER EXISTS!
EDDIE BROCK... DEAD?!
MAYBE... BUT ONE THING'S FOR SURE: SPIDEY WILL WISH HE WAS DEAD WHEN HE RUNS INTO BIG PROBLEMS NEXT ISSUE! ANOTHER SYMBIOTE..?
NAAHH...
FIVE OF 'EM! CHECK IT OUT IN THIRTY DAYS!
R. LIM-DELAROSA!